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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW UN MANDATE NEEDED FOR UNAMA ELECTION  
PARTICIPATION

Classified By: CDDEA Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 9 meeting with ambassadors, UN SRSG Kai Eide reported that President Karzai had initially been very angry to learn that ambassadors had discussions the possibility of postponing the 2010 parliamentary and district council elections, but that after seeing the UN paper and discussing it with Eide, the Afghan President was now open-minded to the idea and favors a continued role for the UN and international community in future polls. Eide also pointed out that UNAMA has no authority to participate in elections preparations until the UNSC approves a new mandate. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Expressing frustration that news of UNAMA's paper outlining potential problems related to the 2010 elections --shared at a previous UNAMA-led ambassadorial meeting -- had been shared with Karzai, Eide said he had received a formal letter from Foreign Minister Spanta at Karzai's behest, decrying the paper. The letter accused the international community of making determinations about Afghanistan's elections without first seeking input from the Afghan government. When Eide relayed to Karzai that these were just discussions to lay out the questions that need to be addressed before the next election, that no options about an actual postponement were on the table, and that he had twice sought to meet with Karzai on the issue, Karzai relented and became "much more open-minded" by the end of their discussion about the possibility of postponing the elections. In response to Karzai's question about when the elections should be held, Eide said he thought they could be held in 2011. Eide also raised procedural challenges standing in the way of greater "Afghanization" of the elections process. If, for example, Karzai wished to remove the complement of UN-appointed international commissioners at the Electoral Complaints Committee (ECC), Eide pointed out, that he would have to change Afghan electoral law to do so. Karzai responded that this was not his intention, but indicated he understood the value of changing the law. Eide said he was "relieved" by Karzai's approach to the election issue thus far, adding that he believed Karzai was ready to work with the international community to address these questions about the feasibility of the 2010 elections.

¶3. (C) The Aga Khan Foundation representative reported that he had discussed with Abdullah Abdullah the need for reforms and the possibility of a delay in the next election. Abdullah reportedly was agreeable to a delay, if the delay would allow adequate time for real reform in the elections. Abdullah confirmed that position n a 12/8 dinner hosted by Charge Ricciardone. He said electoral reform was top priority even if it meant a delay.

¶4. (C) Looking forward to 2010, Eide raised the problem that the UN currently has no mandate to participate in future elections in Afghanistan, and UNAMA is unable even to convene any specific elections-related working group meeting because its mandate has expired. To obtain a new mandate, President Karzai must make a formal request to the UN, which the Security Council would have to approve. Eide also called for the international community to define its role on the upcoming elections issue, particularly the role the

UN should take with regard to the Independent Elections Committee (IEC). Some would like the UN to be fully integrated into the IEC, Eide reported, while others want the UN to maintain its independence. The complexity of the assistance role needs to be worked out as planning for the next round begins, he stated.

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